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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to define a rationale for use in the refinements of daily curriculum operations in a school district, and establish a general understanding about policy and non-policy matters in curriculum. It is concluded that the area of curriculum should be guided by written policies which demonstrate that appropriate attention has been given to the articulation tasks. Such written positions should contain a shared set of beliefs that illustrate the commitment of faculty, administrators, boardmembers, parents, amd citizens alike to the learners in the local process called education. In addition, the day-to-day assuring activities so vital in the observations about the effect of the educational program should be developed by the principal and faculty along with the parents of each school. The major nature of these activities should be primarily determined by the content of professional statements collectively stemming from the faculty of each school. A 12-item bibliography and an appendix discussing district-wide subject matter study committees and coordinators are provided. (DCS)

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# EXPANSION OF THE CONCEPT OF SCOPE AND SEQUENCE IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

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Presented to

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
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INTRODUCTION:

Today, it is claimed by many that all is not well in the schools of the country. It is not likely that this thought is a "new disease" that sprang up over-night. These thoughts probably stem partially from the results obtained from time worn, out-dated approaches to establishing a school program. However, the real nature of these problems are as stated by Gilchrist and Roberts,

> ... the problems of our school systems are essentially problems of involvement and curricular development ... approach must focus on the nature and needs of the learner and on the involvement of pupils, teachers, administration and parents and other laymen in the development of curriculum.

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Gilchrist, Robert and Roberts, Bernice R., Curriculum Development: A Humanized Systems Approach, (Belmont, California: A Phi Delta Kappa Book 1974), Preface.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this paper is to define a rationale for use in the refinement of day-to-day operations for the area of curriculum in a school district. Also, the establishment of a general understanding about policy and non-policy matters in curriculum is a major goal of this paper. No criticism of any specific group(s) or individual(s) is intended but critical statements are used in order to illustrate what has become unduly limiting practices or attitudes that, if continued, are major detractions from accomplishing the work of achieving the excellence in education now desired by so many.

TOWARD A NEW DIMENSION:

How should the new approaches be defined? What should they be expected to accomplish?

It is imperative that the responsibility for the various "parts and pieces" of the school organization be redefined. The educational and experiential levels of current day educators make today's "balance of decision-making" within the area of the school curriculum to be out of reason. For example, a medical doctor or an attorney do not go outside their level of expertise for a final decision on what operations will be performed or what law cases will be referenced in litigation. Yet, in this day on most purely educational matters, educators are often required to seek not one "final decision" but two or three before any action can be taken.

Although policy-making activities and relationships should remain essentially the same, it is past time to recognize that there is a clearly definable area beyond policy that requires the re-assignment of some decision-making authority concerning some curricular issues from a few groups and individual offices to teachers and principals within their schools. Goodlad spoke to the heart of this matter when he wrote,

> ... I want to re-emphasize the states positive responsibilities. States have a right and responsibility to articulate educational expectations for schools. They have a further right and responsibility to call upon local districts to assure comprehensive, balance curricula in each school. They have a responsibility, also, to conduct studies designed to reveal overall strengths and shortcomings and to disseminate the findings widely, without reference to specific schools. They have a responsibility to assess the costs involved in needed improvements and to the degree possible, assure the needed resources. The states doing all of these things well would fulfill their accountability for curricular development.[2]

FURTHER REFINEMENT OF A BASIC CONCEPT:

From the foregoing, it follows that the local board of education should continue to consider itself as an extension of the state's arm in education to establish policies for carrying-out designated or implied responsibilities in the area of curriculum. However, a contemporary definition

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[2]Goodlad, John I., A Place Called School: Prospects For The Future, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1984) p. 281.

of "local control" should convey the idea that the concept, in itself, does not automatically fix all of the decision-making activity at the board and/or administrative levels. In general, the concept of local control simply means that local responsibility will be demonstrated in some manner and through some "mix" of appropriate people in a way that produces clear decisions on designated issues and/or in designated areas of the organization. Too often, the prevailing practice tends to implement local control in curricular affairs by requiring that practically all decision-making in all areas of the organization be finalized by the board and/or a high level administrator(s). No longer, is this approach totally acceptable in the area of curriculum. Drawing from an earlier quote in this paper from Goodlad,[3] local boards should respond to state responsibilities by concentrating in the curriculum area on:

(1) the articulation of the education expectations for the local schools,

(2) the assurance of a comprehensive, balanced curricula in each school in the district,

(3) the provision of the resources, to the level possible, necessary to carry-out the instructional program of each school in the district, and,

(4) the conduct of studies designed to reveal overall strengths and shortcomings of the curricula.

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[3] Ibid.

It is predictable that the definition and implementation of item 1 in regard to "the articulation" and "the assurance" mentioned in item 2 would be major stumbling blocks in most efforts to re-define and re-assign some traditional responsibilities.

People tend to do what they know how to do and see little need for change unless some of the proposed outcomes can take on a personal meaning for them. Further, as Elliot W. Eisner[4] points out, "We seem to grasp for solutions to ill conceived problems and to rely upon slogans rather than deep debate to find out if the problems are real and if the solutions proposed are relevant." The record indicates that it is seldom that deep debates have occurred among decision-makers in arriving at solutions about the curriculum. Perhaps it is because their direct responsibility is not within the teaching process of the schools. A close look at the terms, "articulation" and "assurance" reveals, that one can be compatible with the other if the proper organizational preparations are made.

Articulation merely means to coordinate or to establish the fact that any inherent quality of continuity required in order to complete a process will or has occurred.

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[4]Eisner, Elliot W., "The Kind of Schools We Need," Educational Leadership, (Alexandria, Va., Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development), Oct., 1983, p.49.

For example, the development of reading skills is claimed to be based "one skill upon another." Obviously, then, reading articulation at the organizational level should illustrate itself in a written agreement among the faculty in regard to the sequence of skills intended to be taught in the schools of the district. Scope and sequence work in curriculum usually centers around this type activity. This is policy-making and approvable by the board of education. Those at the organizational level, as well as those within the classroom, should understand that articulation is a term that applies to the development of content proficiency more than any other part of the curriculum. Such agreement should be acceptable through the policy level and be treated as such.

The term, assurance, is more often used to mean a positive position or statement that is intended to give confidence or encouragement. It is a non-adversorial term based on the idea of cooperation and trust. It is from language truly effective in the education of students. Through all of the experience, education, research work, and reading of this writer, no significient indication has been found in regard to how "assurance" becomes a collective term in regard to the human base used here. In other words, there appears to be no written or programmed procedure that can be utilized in arriving at "district-level assurance of the curriculum impact on each student."

In fact, students, parents, and teachers are the only direct sources of the "assurance" that should be sought by educators and laymen with organizational responsibilities.

A RETURN TO SOME STATED BELIEFS:

At this point, it is the opinion of this writer that few educators disagree with the proposition that both articulation and assurance are key ingredients in a high level of excellence in any educational program. Further, random observations in various school districts suggest that the scope and sequence work (articulation) has been given high priority while in others the more humanistic elements contained in the assurance work of professionals have been encouraged to be at the forefront in schools. It is the contention of this writer that both areas can be equally approached with the result being a higher quality program. A set of written beliefs adopted at the policy level will "bridge the gap." Educators need to re-discover the fact that there is really nothing wrong with "believing something that can be understood and conveyed but not precisely measured." In fact, quality will be improved even if many of the beliefs cannot be quantified. The unrelenting efforts of those who would measure tothe absolute each and every micron in education are as extreme as those who would measure nothing in education. Beliefs, abstract purposes,

have been the main-stream of quality education for centuries. It is obvious that educators can handle the flexibility necessary in illustrating such things as the obtainment of information on their way to accomplishing the full tasks of education if they will be more exacting in the definition of their various tasks AND if school organizations will be more accommmodating in organizational refinements. Following are eight points that serve as examples of beliefs that are timely in today's world of education.[5]

First, a belief in a linkage of professionals and their interactions by a common policy within the framework of their institution is not only desirable but essential.

Second, a belief in the necessity for order must be present. Order, in its true sense, establishes an acceptable relationship among the elements of time, place and function.

Third, there must be belief in the life of the mind. This belief recognizes that learning is never a completed task but develops toward a higher level as experiences become integrated into the life of each individual.

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[5]Boyles, Lyle E., "Let's Take Some Instruction To the Students," Improving College and University Teaching, Yearbook 1976, Corvallis, Oregon, Oregon State University Press, 1976, pp. 29-32.

Fourth, there should exist a belief in constructive criticism which can be given through established methods and procedures within organizations.

Fifth, a belief in the value of the individual must be kept foremost in mind. Although it is basic to most societies, this belief is sometimes the one that is most difficult to sustain for great periods of time within an institution. The closness of day-to-day activities and relationships can sometimes cloud the fact that all have some positive qualities and it is upon these that further development should be built.

Sixth, an organization should function in accordance with a belief in personal integrity. A common belief should encompass the feeling that any action taken or criticism given is done in good faith and not solely for personal gain or grandeur but for the benefit of all concerned.

Seventh, an organization is strengthened considerably when a belief exists among its membership that there are times when value judgments are necessary. Those who hold primary responsibility for the process must be permitted to make some value judgments. On the other hand, those who affilate with an organization must commit themselves to accepting such judgments when they have been made in accordance with the best evidence available.

Eighth, a belief in humility and an openness to positive change is of great importance.

Of course, the people in each local district should develop their own agreed upon list.

NATURE OF THE PROFESSIONAL STATEMENTS CONCERNING CURRICULUM

In order to create more appropriate language consistent with the establishment of a general understanding about policy and non-policy matters in curriculum, it is necessary to begin to think in terms of both "professional statements" and "policy positions," for organizational direction in the area of curriculum. Policy is a governmental term used to locate a source of power or authority. A policy speaks more to "by whose authority" than it does to "equal participation in maintaining an evolving common direction." Policy is usually rather rigid and requires considerable time to change or alter. A professional statement is far more open to change and alteration -- more responsive to "at the scene" decision-making and forward direction. In short, policy tends to represent group requirements while a professional statement tends to encourage individual confidence, security and ownership.

The first element in a district's policy should establish a definition of curriculum. Certainly, each school district undertaking policy development in this area should

work through a group process involving the people of the organization in the creation of a definition. However, this writer believes that the learner must be center most in mind. Learning should be learner directed with the teacher functioning as a source of safety and support. To this end, curriculum is an attempted definition of humans translated into educational specifications.[6] Such a definition will provide school persons with organizational level responsibilities with the opportunity to fix the primary responsibility for "assurance" in the learning process with the teachers and principal of each school in the district. The remaining elements of the statement should speak to beliefs about individual, professional relationships (assurance) and to the nature of creating the coordination toward the development of content proficiency for learners (articulation).

CENTER STAGE -- THE INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL:

Recently, some scholars have been providing material that clearly indicates that cross-purposes and random directions among educators have been and are causing some genuine disruption in the learning/teaching process in schools.

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[6]Dobson, Russell and Dobson, Judith, The Language of Schooling, (Washington, D.C.; University Press of American, Inc., 1981) pp 11-12.

Although it is an organizationally caused problem to the degree defined in the foregoing pages of this paper, it is also an attitudinal problem of significant proportion. It has been easy for many to give lip service to the idea that "learners should be free to learn and teachers should be free to teach while, at the sametime, practicing far different approaches. Dobson[7] writes to the problem in the following manner:

> Values are an important element in an individual's life. And yet, many schools do not provide the freedom nor encourage individuals (teachers and students) to express and live by their own values. Students are often viewed not as total human beings but as producers and are judged on the number of correct answers or assignments completed. Competition, rather than cooperation also is stressed based upon the notion that it's a hard, cruel world and teachers must prepare children and youth to compete in a dog-eat-dog society. Those students who "buy into" the values permeating many school systems are judged as winners; those who do not are evaluated as losers.

Toward the problem of attitude, Chesler and Pritzken are quoted and added to by Zais[8] who has written:

> It is a unique school indeed in which teachers discuss their classroom problems, techniques, and progress with one another and with their principal. In most schools teachers practice their own methods -- rarely hearing, or every caring if one of their colleagues is experimenting with some new teaching device or technique (Chesler et al. 1963, p. 76).

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[7] Dobson, Russell; Russell, Judith: Kessinger, John, Staff Development; A Humanistic Approach (Washington, D.C.; University Press of America, Inc. 1980), P. 82.

[8] Zais, Robert S., Curriculum: Principles and Foundations. (New York; Harper & Row, Publishers, 1976), pp. 476-477.

. . . .

> This would seem to suggest that teachers themselves do not view curriculum development as one of their professional responsibilities.
>
> The unavoidable fact of ultimate teacher control over the operational curriculum is, perhaps, what has let Pritzken (1959, p. 3) to write "curriculum improvement (is) equated with teaching." If this be the case, then we cannot help but conclude that the same must certainly be true for the engineering process. Thus, in spite of the constraints of teachers' limited knowledge of curriculum work, their apparent indifference to curriculum responsibilities and their lack of time, their ultimate control over curriculum at point of implementation is a fact that curriculum engineers cannot avoid reckoning with in the engineering process.

Throughout the pages of this paper, it is implied that there will be an effect on the school organizaiton in regard to any significant change in the status quo of the curriculum engineering process. At this point, it should be clear that to make organizational changes effective teachers and principals must prepare to more clearly demonstrate the manner in which teachers talk among themselves as well as the parents and citizens alike. To this end, they must be the forefront of establishing an "assurance" that the schooling is revelant, responsive, and effective in their efforts with each learner. Recent studies and literature in the field have again underscored the importance of building leadership. Liberman and Miller have stated,[9]

> ... through our discussion of teaching and schooling, one figure looms large --- albeit sometimes from the shadows. The school principal, no matter what his or her background abilities, is someone who must be reckoned with in effort to make schools better.

> Current studies (Bremar and McLaughlin, 1978) tell us again and again that the principal is the critical person in school improvement, that building level leadership is the single most important variable in changing an emphasis, setting a tone, implementing a program, opening or closing a possibility.

This writer has come to believe that there are two fundamental areas of preliminary activity needed to get the process started in that direction. First, each principal should encourage an environment that will create a forum among parents, students, and teachers in a school. Regardless of the nature of the specific environment, the forum should become a group process with membership to the group open and flexible. The nature of the needs for discussion should primarily determine the direction of the forum. The school principal should be catalytic to the process but should not become known as "the chairperson" of the forum. The principal's leadership style should be compatible with effective group procedures for problem-solving and decision-making.

Second, the school faculty should be encouraged to develop dialogue about "teaching" and "students."

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[9] Lieberman, Ann and Miller, Lynne, Teachers, Their World, and Their Work; Implications for School Improvement (Alexandria, Va.; Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1984) p. 61.

They should be encouraged and it should be made possible for them to "intermingle" in their on-going activities concerned with teaching and understanding students. Combs[10] has written that "all behavior, without exception, is a function of the behaver's perceptual field at the instant of behaving." Further, he stated:

> If behavior is a function of perception, it follows that to understand behavior it will be necessary to study the factors influencing perception in the individual. Among these are:
>
> 1. The Effect of the Physical Organism. Perception depends upon the possession of the necessary equipment to make it possible. One must have eyes to see, ears to hear, olfactory organs to smell and so on.
> 2. The Effect of Time. Perception takes time. What is perceived is dependent upon the time of exposure and the length of time one has lived in the world.
> 3. The Effect of Opportunity or Environment. Perceptions are learned. To perceive one must have had opportunity to experience the events that make them possible. Eskimos do not normally comprehend bananas, nor Hottentots, snow. What meanings exist for the individual are a consequence of his unique experience in the process of his growing up.[11]

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[10] Combs, Arthur W., "Some Basic Concepts in Perceptual Psycology," Curriculum Planning: A New Approach, Glen Hass, Editor, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1980), p. 158.

[11] Ibid

This writer contends that as teachers, themselves, begin to experience the nature of this process, they will become increasingly motivated and knowledgable about involving learners in a similar process based on the same foundation.

There is much evidence to support the fact, that, presently, the attitude of learners contains an element of awareness toward better human relations. Shane has conducted a study which revealed that:

> Regardless of the background of the U.S. teenagers interviewed, one phenomenon was noted. The role that every boy and girl foresaw was more or less a reflection of a present life style. While recognizing the sweep of change, youth apparently do not envision themselves going through any major personal or socioeconomic upheavals or mutations resulting from energy crisis, pollution, or social unrest. They envision a future that is a good bit like the present, but much improved through better human relations.[12]

This odd mix of elements within the attitudes of learners and teachers strongly suggests that indeed, both will learn from each other as this process unfolds.

It has been written:

> The truth about curriculum change is that it is one thing to talk about it, and quite another to put it into practice and keep it going.

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[12] Holt, Maurice, Regenerating the Curriculum, (Boston: Roitledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 1.

> The assumption behind the major curricular development projects of the 1960's was that a central innovating team could devise new approaches and materials appealing enough to flourish in them. But it was clear by the early 1970's that this was to ask too much of the centriperiphery model of curriculum innovation; putting theory into practice just isn't that easy. Behind any strategy for curriculum change lie assumptions about the nature both of theory and practice, and unless these ring true the strategy will founder.[13]

Further,

> In the final analysis if curriculum planning is a matter of planning means to specified ends, and an educational curriculum therefore serves educational ends, the clearer we are about those ends and their nature, the more adequate the planning can be.[14]

And finally as stated by Goodlad,

> "Developing the capability to effect improvements is more important than effecting a specific change."[15]

CONCLUSION:

It is the conclusion of this writer that the area of curriculum should be guided by written policies which demonstrate that appropriate attention has been given to the articulation tasks. Such written position should contain a shared set of beliefs that illustrate the commitment of faculty, administrators, board members, parents and citizens alike to the learners in the local process called education.

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[13] Golly, Michael; Greenwalk, Jane; West, Ruth, Curriculum Design, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1975) p. 285.

[14] Arieh, Lewy; Handbook of Curriculum Evaluation, New York; International Institute for Educational Planning, 1977.

[15] Goodlad, Op. Cit., p. 282.

In addition, the day-to-day assuring activities so vital in the observations about the effect of the educational program should be developed by the principal and faculty along with the parents of each school. The major nature of these activities should be primarily determined by the content of professional statements collectively stemming from the faculty of each school.

The material in this paper is intended to serve as broad guidelines to be used toward "setting the charge" for the work of the "locals" in their efforts to make the impact of a district's curriculum more effective.

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## BASIC BOARD POLICIES RELATIVE TO SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

I. District-Wide Subject Matter Study Committees

II. District-Wide Subject Matter Coordinators

## SUBJECT MATTER STUDY COMMITTEES IN CURRICULUM WORK

General Statement:

Curriculum work provides one of the most important means of improving the quality of the instructional program and adjusting it to the changing needs of students. Teachers are expected to participate in these activities at all levels, i.e., building and district-wide. Teachers are expected to participate in the usual instructional and curriculum work activities within their buildings as a regular part of their responsibilities. This may include after school hours, as well as, time during the regular school day.

District-wide studies which include teachers from grades K-12, K-6, or 7-12 are compensated at the rate of $6.25 per hour. Principals who are appointed to the study committee receive the same per hour rate.

For purposes of compensation, the chairperson(s) will establish the maximum number of clock hours for the study prior to the commencing of the study and in consultation with the principals who have teachers on the committee and the members of the committee. The maximum clock hours allocated by the chairperson(s) will be made known before committee work commences on the study.

The expenditure of money for specific curriculum tasks including the study itself under this policy will be approved by the Board on the basis of proposals reviewed by the principals and recommended to the Board by the Superintendent of Schools.

Procedures for Study Committees:

1. Criteria for selection of the academic area for curriculum study committee:

   A. Dependent upon felt need of principals, teachers, students and parents.

   B. Dependent upon length of time when district curriculum work was last performed in this area.

   C. Dependent upon budget considerations.

D. Dependent upon recommendation of District's Steering Committee for Curriculum.

2. Selection of chairperson or co-chairpersons for curriculum study:

   A. An administrator, usually a principal or assistant principal, is chosen by the principals to serve as chairman of the study. This individual usually volunteers his/her services and is then confirmed by the group. The principal's academic background and his/her elementary or secondary responsibilities are taken into consideration.

   B. A co-chairperson will be appointed from the teaching faculty in the academic area to be studied.

3. Selection of membership for curriculum committees:

   A. Principals of each building confirm the teachers from their building that will serve as members of the curriculum study committee. The principal will review such items as teacher's educational and experiential background, length of service in the district, level of communication skills used by the teacher, etc.

   B. If the curriculum study is confined to secondary, (grades 7-12) only junior and senior high teachers are selected. If the study is limited to elementary (grades K-6) only elementary teachers will be selected. Studies that include both elementary and secondary levels and encompass grades K-12 will have teacher membership that represents all schools involved.

   C. The number of teachers selected from each building depends upon the size of the faculty in each school. A total committee size is determined by the principals in cooperation with the Superintendent of Schools.

4. Responsibilities of chairperson(s) for curriculum study committee:

   A. To keep the Superintendent of Schools informed concerning progress and direction of the committee.

   B. To determine, in cooperation with the Superintendent of Schools the maximum amount of hours necessary to complete the study.

C. To set meeting times and places with members of the study committee.

D. To help select the appropriate outside consultation services, when such has been approved in the initial proposal submitted to the Board of Education.

E. To help determine secondary school parent memberships on the committees, which involve secondary subjects (grades 7-12). At least three or four parents will be involved on study committees. The President or designated member of each P.T.O. will be members of committees which involve elementary subjects (grades K-6).

F. To keep an accurate record of individual committee members attendance at all meetings and to report same to the Superintendent of Schools for payment upon completion of the study.

G. To recommend to the Superintendent of Schools and the Board of Education the study committee's work including a written plan of instruction including time lines and funding recommendations for implementation into the current program.

5. Responsibilities of curriculum committee members:

A. To actively participate in curriculum development in the subject matter area under study in the committee and to recommend a written plan of instruction.*

B. To attend all meetings and work in conjunction with the appropriate principal in reporting back to the building faculties upon the progress of the committee at appropriate times. Ideas and suggestions from teachers not on the committee should be sought by committee members whenever possible so as to create total faculty involvement in the committee study.

C. To assist in the implementation of the curriculum revisions as adopted by the Board of Education in each committee member's school.

* A written plan of instruction should show a division of subject matter or skill development in grade sequence. In addition, it should list the basal text and supplementary materials that will be best suited for the teaching of the sequence contained in the written plan.

## SUBJECT MATTER COORDINATORS -- GRADES K-12

A. Rational

1. To eliminate unnecessary subject matter repetition,
2. To promote greater subject area articulation in the schools,
3. To improve the quality of teaching in the school, and
4. To increase teacher cooperation within subject matter areas of the schools.

B. Consideration of a Coordinator for a subject matter area will be given after appropriate subject area studies have been completed.

C. Description of Duties:

1. Curriculum

   a. Help develop comprehensive, coordinated programs in grades K-12, and
   b. Help correlate teaching materials to written plans of instruction.

2. Personnel

   a. Cooperate with principals in holding orientation meetings for teachers new to the district to familiarize them with the appropriate subject matter area,
   b. Become aware of the total program by visiting in teachers' classes in the subject area,
   c. Plan visits to other classes for teachers in the subject area, and
   d. Meet with teachers in their subject matter areas periodically.

3. Textbooks and Supplemental Materials

   a. Serve as chairman of all textbook committees in the subject matter area, and
   b. Work with teachers in supplementary materials selection.

4. Audio Visual

   a. Recommend audio-visual equipment and supplemental materials needed to improve the curriculum, and

b. Encourage appropriate use of audio-visuals in classes.

5. In-Service Training

a. Assist in the evaluation of strengths and weaknesses in the program, and
b. Propose and plan in-service programs to improve the subject area program.

6. Research

a. Help plan and conduct research in the subject matter area to discover if the program is meeting the needs of students, and
b. Help plan and conduct follow-up studies of students to determine whether the program has met their needs.

7. Other

a. Perform other appropriate duties as assigned.

D. Employment

1. Selection of coordinators shall be achieved through recommendation of the principals and the Superintendent of schools as submitted to the Board of Education for approval.

2. Subject matter coordinators will receive either released time, extra pay, or a combination of both their duties.